

Grant House, Sedona Prince & Nya Harrison
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December 2nd, 2024

Senior District Judge Claudia Wilken
United States District Court for the Northern District of California
Oakland Courthouse
1301 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612

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CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

C 20-3919 CW

Dear Judge Wilken,

We, the college athlete plaintiffs and class representatives in the *In Re College Athlete NIL Litigation* matter, express our gratitude for the landmark settlement agreement that has been proposed to resolve the matter. If granted final approval, the settlement agreement's terms will unlock billions of dollars for athletes past, present and future. This would be a monumental step in recognizing our contributions to the financial success of college athletics, our universities, their communities, and the many third parties that operate within the college athletics ecosystem.

As plaintiffs and class representatives, we recognize that it is unusual to communicate directly with the Court. We believe our class lawyers have done a magnificent job for college athletes in effecting the proposed settlement, but we also recognize that they are limited in their ability to effectuate the changes we intended to make in college athletics. We are writing to Your Honor directly because you have played a critical role over the past decade in establishing and protecting the rights of college athletes in a variety of ways.

While the proposed settlement is a significant step forward, there still remains a critical need for structural changes to protect athletes and to prevent the failures of the past. College athletes must have independent representation to standardize NIL compensation contracts they will be entering into with their universities, to establish equitable minimum payments, to provide true health protections, and to create an ecosystem where athletes can thrive, as the current system is saturated with misaligned incentives that jeopardize the holistic development of the athletes that drive it.

We need a players' association. After exploring existing options we believe Athletes.org (AO) is the solution, therefore we have all become members. Here's why. AO has nearly 4000 college athlete members and currently helps its members navigate critical issues like reviewing NIL agreements, agent verification, and provides opportunities for our voices to be organized and heard on the policies shaping our collegiate experience. Led by current college athletes who are supported by a team of former athletes and esteemed legal counsel, AO is built to advocate for us today. With a Board composed of sports industry experts like former coaches,

commissioners, athletic directors, and media execs, we are able to get multiple perspectives on issues that college athletics is faced with.

Currently, the NCAA, conferences, schools, and their respective collectives are using the proposed settlement to define financial frameworks, consider restrictive contracts for athletes, adjust rules that infringe on athletes' rights, and lobby Congress for an antitrust exemption. While professional leagues include athletes in these decisions through their respective players associations, the college system continues to prevent our players association from representing us at the decision making tables. School leaders claim to "hear from athletes," but existing mechanisms like Student Athlete Advisory Committees (SAAC) lack the resources, authority, independence, and inclusion to truly represent college athletes on these issues.

Without independent, formal representation separate from schools or their affiliates, athletes will inevitably remain in a vulnerable position, perpetuating the cycle of inequity and paving the way for continued litigation.

AO provides the infrastructure to offer the collective voice, legal guidance and resources we need to address these challenges constructively, ensuring a fair and sustainable future for college athletics.

We respectfully ask the Court to lend its imprimatur to our efforts to ensure that college athletes have a voice in building the structure of college athletics moving forward. Additionally, we request that this letter be made part of the case record to highlight the importance of these issues.

If the Court has any questions, the undersigned plaintiffs would be happy to respond.

Thank you for your continued commitment to justice and equity for college athletes.

Respectfully,
Grant House, Sedona Prince, Nya Harrison